



Impact and the Research Excellence Framework

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HEFCE's strategic aim for research

“HEFCE aims to develop and sustain a dynamic and internationally competitive research sector that makes a major contribution to economic prosperity, national wellbeing and the expansion and dissemination of knowledge”



Why assess impact?

- Substantial increases in public funding for research in the past decade
- The success of the UK research base internationally:
 - punching above its weight in quality and productivity
 - achieving benefits to society and the economy
- We can build on this success by ensuring a 'level playing field' and encouraging beneficial engagement
- Benefits can be demonstrated more clearly to strengthen the case for future investment

The REF consultation

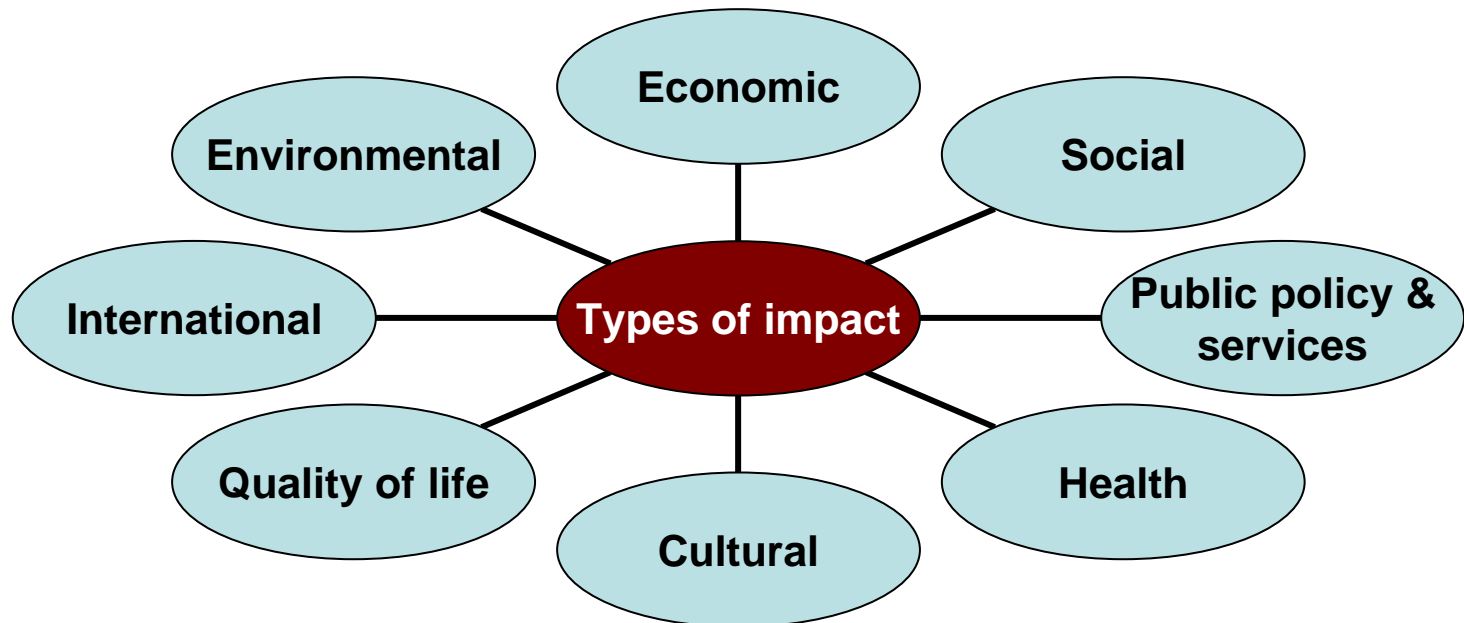
- Proposals to assess impact that has arisen from excellent research, as a significant factor in the REF:
 - To be assessed through a process of expert review
 - The method to be developed through a pilot exercise
- There was broad support for including ‘historical’ impact in the REF, subject to the development of a robust method and an appropriate weighting
- Objections appeared to reflect concerns about ‘predicting’ impact
- Much constructive feedback about the challenges of defining, evidencing, attributing and assessing impact

Where we are now

- Taking account of the feedback
- Impact pilot exercise is well underway
- Continued dialogue
- Decisions on the weighting and method for impact after the pilot concludes (autumn 2010)

Parameters for assessing impact

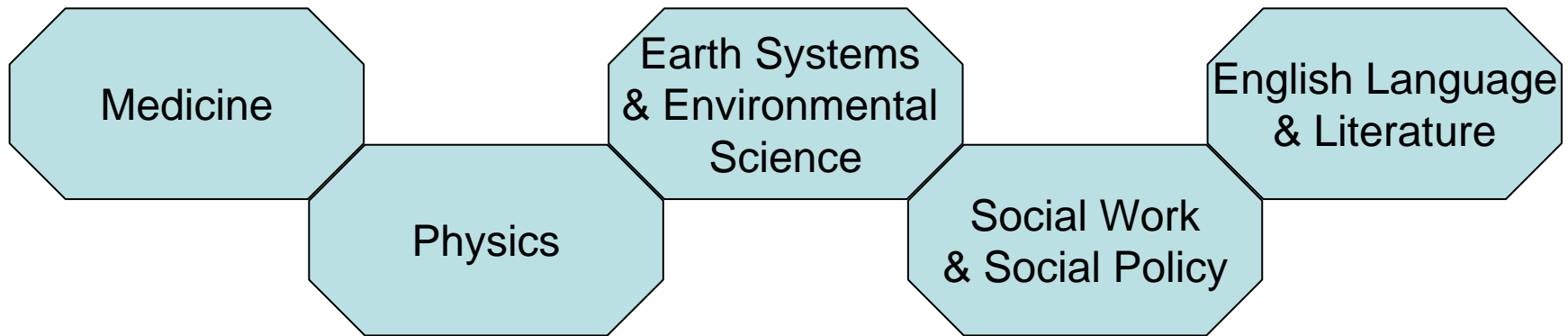
- Wide definition of impact



Parameters for assessing impact

- Wide definition of impact
- Impacts that have occurred during the REF period, underpinned by research over a longer timeframe
- Impact of the unit as a whole, drawing on exemplars
- Impact underpinned by excellent research, of all types
- Qualitative explanation supported by quantitative indicators
- Assessment through expert review, within panels according to appropriate criteria
- Input from external audiences, users and beneficiaries in partnership with academics
- Minimum burden necessary to enable robust assessment

The impact pilot exercise



- 29 UK HEIs, each submitting to two UOAs
- Impact during 2005-09, underpinned by research since 1993
- Each submission to include:
 - An overview statement
 - One case study per 10 research staff
- Assessment and feedback by expert panels

Evidencing impact through case studies

- What's the social or economic benefit?
- What 'underpinning' research was done at the HEI and how did it contribute to the benefit?
- What evidence is there to support the above?
- Common template and word limits
- Examples and feedback from the pilot exercise will be published

Some questions

- Who are the audiences, users and beneficiaries?
- What kinds of impact have arisen?
- What are the pathways to impact?
- How robust is the evidence?
- What kinds of indicators are useful?
- What criteria differentiate between case studies?

The impact pilot panels

Clinical Medicine

- Chair: Alex Markham
- NHS, NICE, MHRA, ABPI, GSK, Roche, INVOLVE, GMC, ARC, BHF

Physics

- Chair: Peter Saraga
- Rolls Royce, IBM, Vodaphone, DSTL, TSB, STFC, NHS, NI Science Park, Science Museum

Earth Systems & Environmental Science

- Chair: Bob Watson, CSA DeFRA
- BP, Shell, Willis Re, Viridor Waste, RSPH, Scottish Government, Environment Agency, Natural England, Greenpeace, DfID



The impact pilot panels

Social Work & Social Policy

- Chair: Paul Wiles, CSA Home Office
- BAAF, AgeUK, SCIE, National Youth Agency, Nuffield Foundation, Hanover Housing Group, EHRC, Local Government Association, Scottish Government, DWP

England Language & Literature

- Chair: Judy Simons
- BBC, Authors/journalists/reviewers, British Library, British Council, Shakespeare's Globe, Penguin Press, Brunswick Group LLP, AHRC

Thank you for listening

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